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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/NGA AND NEA/ARP

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [IZ](#) [TC](#)  
SUBJECT: SADDAM'S CAPTURE - UAEG REACTION

Classified by Ambassador Marcelle M. Wahba, Reasons  
1.5 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) UAE officialdom reacted positively to Saddam's capture. In an official statement released December 15, UAE President Shaykh Zayed expressed the hope that Iraq will witness a new era of stability and security in which its national unity and territorial integrity will be preserved. "Iraq has been relieved of a heavy burden and this will enable it to move forward to a new era where there will be no despotism, oppression, and fear, and none of the practices that destroyed Iraq over recent decades, causing serious damage to the whole of the Arab and Islamic nations," the statement read.

¶2. (U) Zayed continued, "I hope that the recent developments in Iraq will contribute to the restoration of stability and peace in that country, and will prove to be a stepping-stone that will permit the Iraqi people to unify their ranks and to strengthen their national reconciliation, giving priority, above all else, to that which will foster the unity of Iraq as a country and as a people, working hand-in-hand for a bright future."

¶3. (C) Deputy Prime Minister and de facto Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamdan bin Zayed told the Ambassador on December 14 that the capture was significant and a positive outcome. Capturing Saddam alive was better for the Iraqis, he said, because they now have a chance to bring him to trial. Shaykh Hamdan said he hoped to hear similar news about Al Qaida leaders Osama bin Laden and Ayman Al-Zawahiri.

¶4. (U) The Emirati press also reacted positively to Saddam's capture, with the English daily Gulf News describing the event as an opportunity to start afresh, to end the phase of armed resistance to the coalition, and to move ahead with rebuilding a new Iraq based on the will of the people as expressed freely and without coercion.

WAHBA